

REMARKS

Status of the claims

Claims 1-18 are canceled. New claims 19-30 are added. No new matter is added.

Amendments to the claims

New claims 19-22 are drawn to a method of preventing destructive joint disease associated with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in an individual with an earlier stage of RA by placing IFN- α into the mouth of the individual and immediately swallowing the IFN- α . As recited in new claims 23-26, IFN- α that is swallowed immediately also reduces inflammation associated with RA. As recited in new claims 27-30, IFN- α that is swallowed immediately also reduces levels of interleukins IL-1, IL-6, IL-8 in an individual with RA. These new claims do not constitute new matter and are supported in the specification.

The specification distinctly teaches that individuals immediately swallowing a dose of IFN- α within the range of 50 I.U./kg to about 25,000 I.U./kg (pg. 78, ll. 15-18) demonstrate reduced levels of spontaneous or mitogen-induced secretion of interleukins IL-1, IL-6 and IL-8 from PMNCs obtained from individuals with RA (pg. 20, ll. 10-12; pg.

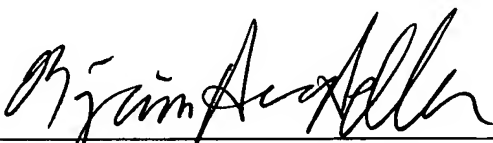
81, ll. 15 to pg. 82, ll. 8, Fig. 23). These interleukins, when present in the joint synovium or when recruiting inflammatory cells into the synovium, can exacerbate RA, induce bone resorption, induce an inflammatory response and amplify and perpetuate inflammation (pg. 84; ll. 25 to pg. 85, ll. 9). After immediately swallowing IFN- α upon administration thereof, all patients exhibited a reduction in the count of painful joints and in the count of swollen joints (pg. 83, ll. 5-10; Table 2). Reduction or elimination of these responses in early stage RA can prevent RA from progressing to the stage of joint destruction (pg. 85, ll. 17-24).

Amendments to the specification

The specification is amended to add sequence identifiers and to correct spelling errors. No new matter is added.

Respectfully submitted,

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